https://priory-of-sion.com/biblios/links/sassoon.html

Deus est machina?

Was manna from heaven really single-cell protein manufactured in a special fermentation unit, long interpreted in Aramaic texts simply as a god called "Ancient of Days"? But if it was a single-cell protein plant, a light source akin to the laser would have been needed to operate it

"And the Children of Israel did eat Manna forty years until they come to a land inhabited" (*Exodus 16:35*)

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There has long been speculation as to what the "manna" which fed the Children of Israel in the desert was. One tradition is that the biblical manna was from the secretion of *Coccidae* which parasites on tamarisk trees *(Tamarix mannifers)*. The insects extract the sap (which is rich in carbohydrates) of the branches of the tree, and the excess which their bodies cannot absorb is secreted as drops of transparent liquid which congeal into white globules containing glucose, fructose, and small amounts of pectin. The material is collected by ants and stored in their nests. Even today, the Bedouin collect this material and use it as a honey substitute. They call it "man".

Though there is some resemblance between this material and the biblical manna, it lacks several features of the biblical food. It contains no protein, whereas the manna of the *Pentateuch* is described as "bread" and as a basic food. Furthermore, "man" is only found during part of the year, and then in insufficient quantities to feed a family—let alone a nation wandering in the wilderness.

Some identify biblical manna with the lichen *Lecanora esculenta*, but there is no evidence that this species has ever been found in the neighbourhood of Israel.

Where, then, did the manna come from? We believe that we have found an answer in the *Kabbalah*. This is a term commonly used for the esoteric teachings of Judaism, especially in the form which they assumed in the Middle Ages, from the 12th century onwards. The word is derived from the Hebrew *QBLH*—"that which is received". Part of this corpus of traditional knowledge is found in three of the books of *Sepher-ha-Zohar (The Book of Splendours)*, most of which was apparently written from oral traditions by a Spanish jew, Moses ben Shem Tov of Leon, in the 13th century.

Our earliest source is the Aramaic *Cremona Codex* (1558), from which was derived the Latin *Kabbalah Denudata* (1644) and the English *Kabbalah Unveiled* (1892). Our original work was carried out using the English translation, and we are currently verifying the uses of the various words involved by retranslating the early Aramaic texts.

The three books contain a detailed physical description of a god called the "Ancient of Days". He consists of a male part (macroprosopus and microprosopus) and a female part (the bride of microprosopus). It was the oddity of a god which could be taken to pieces and reassembled—described, as we have said, in minute detail—which caused us to look closely at the texts, uncluttered by peripheral verbiage, and to decide that there was a high probability that they describe not a god but a machine in anthropomorphic terms.

This is just what one might expect of a non-technological people if they were called upon to describe a complex machine. Such reasoning is supported when we find that the Apache Indians use anthropomorphic words to describe the parts of a motor car—for example, "inda" (eye) for headlights, "tsaws" (vein) for wiring, and "chin" (intestine) for radiator hose.

We therefore feel confident in essaying an interpretation of the description of the "Ancient of Days" of the *Kabbalah* in technological terms. We believe that if indeed the "Ancient of Days" were a mechanical product of some forgotten people, then it is possible that only now is our knowledge sufficient to assign scientific meaning to what has hitherto necessarily seemed mystical or meaningless.

In fact, much use has been made of the *Kabbalah* by "magicians", and much of the commentary on the original texts has sought to clarify by complication—a not uncommon phenomenon. It is, however, what one might expect to happen if a text were interpreted in the wrong way, and one factor in support of our theories is that they considerably simplify interpretation.

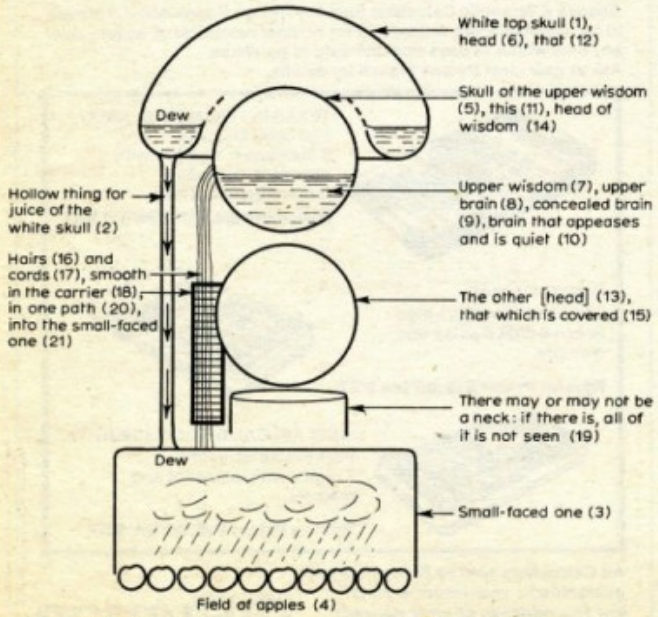

White top skull (1), head (6), that (12)
Skull of the upper wisdom (5), this (11), head of wisdom (14)
Dew
Upper wisdom (7), upper brain (8), concealed brain (9), brain that appeases and is quiet (10)
Hollow thing for juice of the white skull (2)
Hairs (16) and cords (17), smooth in the carrier (18), in one path (20), into the small-faced one (21)
The other [head] (13), that which is covered (15)
There may or may not be a neck: if there is, all of it is not seen (19)
Dew
Small-faced one (3)
Field of apples (4)

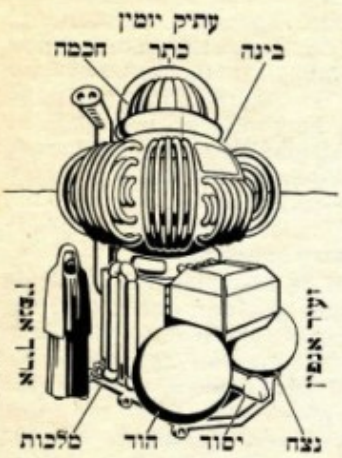
Figure 1 Sketch of the arrangement derived from the translation of the text in Figure 3

Machine for making manna?

We believe that the description is of a machine for making manna. Why? Simply because the texts say so: "Into the skull . . . distils the dew from the white head . . . and from this dew they grind the manna . . . and the manna did not appear to be derived from this dew except at one time: the time when Israel was wandering in the desert."

The three books are divided into 2173 verses, and to demonstrate our method of reconstruction we will take 23 verses and show a sketch based on the information contained in them. Of course, this sketch is by no means the only one which could be drawn from the description. However, by making a series of sketches from the texts, we have been able to assemble a likely and self-consistent picture of the manna-making process.

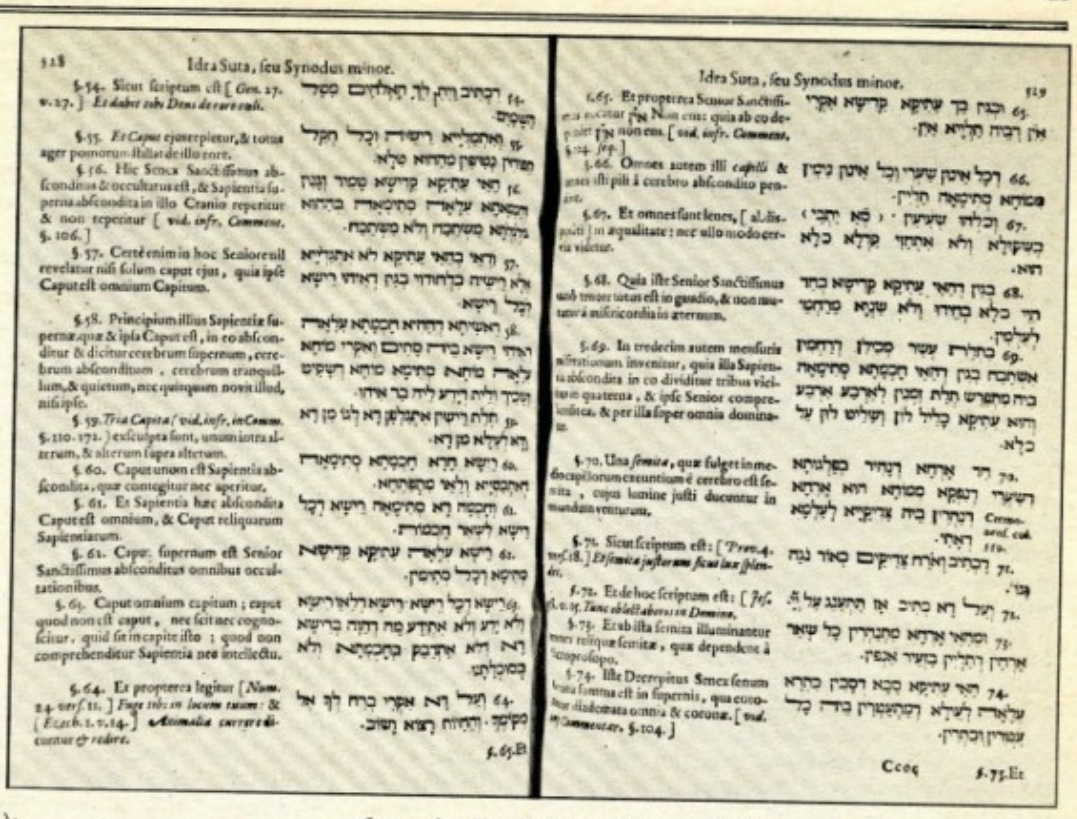
The chosen verses are 51-73 of the book called *HADRA ZVTA QDIShA (Lesser Holy Assembly)*. An embodiment of the description is shown in Figure 1. Figure 3 shows the parallel Latin and Aramaic texts of the same verses



Martin Riches

Figure 2 (above) is an artist's impression of the manna-making machine in Figure 1

Figure 3 (right) shows parallel Latin and Aramaic texts of verses 51-73 from Kabbalah Denudata



518 Idra Suta, seu Synodus minor.

§.54. Sicut scriptum est [*Gen. 27. v. 27.*] *Et dabit tibi Deus de rore cœli.*

§.55. *Et Caput ejus* operitur, & totus ager pomorum stillat de illo rore.

§.56. Hic Senex Sanctissimus absconditus & occultatus est, & Sapientia superna abscondita in illo Cranio reperitur & non reperitur [*vid. infr. Comment.* §. 106.]

§.57. Certè enim in hoc Seniore nil revelatur nisi solum caput ejus, quia ipse Caput est omnium Capitum.

§.58. Principium illius Sapientiæ supernæ quæ & ipsa Caput est, in eo absconditur & dicitur cerebrum supernum, cerebrum absconditum, cerebrum tranquillum, & quietum, nec quisquam novit illud, nisi ipse.

§.59. *Tria Capita* [*vid. infr. in Comm.* §. 110. 172.] exsculpta sunt, unum intra alterum, & alterum supra alterum.

§.60. Caput unum est Sapientia abscondita, quæ contegitur nec aperitur.

§.61. Et Sapientia hæc abscondita Caput est omnium, & Caput reliquarum Sapientiarum.

§.62. Caput supernum est Senior Sanctissimus absconditus omnibus occultationibus.

§.63. Caput omnium capitum; caput quod non est caput, nec fuit nec cognoscitur, quid sit in capite isto; quod non comprehenditur Sapientia nec intellectu.

§.64. Et propterea legitur [*Num. 24. vers. 11.*] *Fuge tibi in locum tuum:* & [*Ezech. 1. v. 14.*] *Animalia currebant & redibant.*

Idra Suta, seu Synodus minor. 519

§.65. Et propterea Senior Sanctissimus occultatur אין Non ens: quia ab eo depingitur אין non ens. [*vid. infr. Comment.* §. 124. *seq.*]

§.66. Omnes autem illi *capilli* & quasi illi pili à cerebro absconditi pendent.

§.67. Et omnes sunt lenes, [al. dispositi] in æqualitate; nec ullo modo cernitur vinctus.

§.68. Quia iste Senior Sanctissimus unà tenet totam est in gaudio, & non mutatur à misericordia in æternum.

§.69. In tredecim autem mensuris nitrationum invenitur, quia illa Sapientia abscondita in eo dividitur tribus vicibus in quaterna, & ipse Senior comprehenditur, & per illa super omnia dominatur.

§.70. Una *semita*, quæ fulget in medio capillorum exeuntium è cerebro est semita, cujus lumine justi ducentur in mundum venturum.

§.71. Sicut scriptum est: [*Prov. 4. vers. 18.*] *Et semita justorum sicut lux splendet.*

§.72. Et de hoc scriptum est: [*Jos. 1. v. 15. Tunc obedient eis in Domino.*

§.73. Et sub illa semita illuminantur omnes reliquæ semitæ, quæ dependent à Microprosopo.

§.74. Ille Decrepitus Senex Senum totius formæ est in supernis, qua exornatur diademata omnia & coronæ. [*vid. in Commentar.* §. 104.]

Ccc 6 §.75. Et

from *Kabbalah Denudata* (1644):

"The skull. The top skull (1) is white. In it there is no beginning or end. The hollow thing of its juices is extended (2) and is made to flow . . . From this hollow thing for juice of the white skull the dew falls every day into the small-faced one (3) . . . And his head is filled, and from the small-faced one it falls to the field [of] apples [or blowers] (4). And all the field [?of] apples flow from that dew. The Ancient Holy One is secret and hidden. And the upper wisdom is concealed in the skull which is found (i.e., can be seen) (5) and from this into that the Ancient One is not opened (i.e., there is no passage visible). And the head (6) is not single [or alone] because it is the top [or head] of the whole head. The upper wisdom is inside the head (7): it is concealed and is called the upper brain (8), the concealed brain (9), the brain that appeases and is quiet (10). And there is no son [of man] that knows it (i.e., it is incomprehensible to us). Three heads are hollowed out: this (11) inside that (12), and this above the other (13). One head is wisdom (14); it is concealed from that which is covered (15). This wisdom is concealed, it is the top of all his heads of the other wisdoms. The upper head is the Ancient and Holy One, the most concealed of all concealed ones. It is the top of the whole head, the head which is not a [conventional] head, and is not known. [This amplifies what has gone before, saying that it is not a normal head, capable of thinking, and that nothing is known about it, because it is concealed, and inaccessible.] And because of this, the Ancient Holy One is called "nothing". And all those hairs (16) and all those cords (17) from the brain are concealed, and are all smooth in the carrier (18). And all of the neck is not seen (19) . . . There is one path that flows in the division of the hairs from the brain (20) . . And from this path there flow all the rest of the paths that hang into the small-faced one (21)."

From other parts of the texts, we know that "hairs" and "cords" are wires and pipes, and we have reason to believe that "wisdom" is a liquid used in the process of making manna.

We now give a short description of the machine derived from the *Kabbalah*—in Kabbalistic terms:

Macroprosopus has two skulls, one above the other, enclosed within an outer skull. The upper skull contains the upper brain, on which dew distils, and the lower contains the heavenly oil. Macroprosopus has four eyes, the upper of the description is shown in Figure 1. Figure 3 shows this is in the middle of the lower skull. The other three are not self-luminous and appear, from left to right, to be black, yellow and red. There is a voluminous beard of 13 conformations, the hairs of which grow out of one part of the face and back in again at another. The hairs are soft, and the holy oil runs through them. The main feature of microprosopus (the small-faced one) is the hard skull, within which there are expanded fire on the one side and air on the other. The subtle air is whirled about it from this side, and the subtle fire is whirled about it from that side. The oil from macroprosopus descends into this skull, where it changes colour from white to red. Round the hard skull of microprosopus is the lower brain, and from that skull there distils a dew upon him which is external, and fills his head daily, and this is manna. Below the skull of microprosopus are the hosts, or testicles, in which the manna collects, and below these the penis through which the manna is drawn. There are few details given of the bride, or woman: she has hairs of many colours but they all terminate in a gold colour, and she is conjoined to microprosopus. On the Sabbath, a trance falls upon microprosopus, and the woman is removed from his back. The parts are then cleaned and reassembled.

By retranslating the original Aramaic, and considering

Sail to New York on page 7

all the possible meanings where there is a choice, we postulate the manna-machine as follows. At the top is a dew-still: a refrigerated, corrugated surface over which air is drawn, from which water condenses. This is fed to a container in the centre of which is a powerful light-source for irradiating a culture, possibly of *Chlorella*-type algae. There are dozens of strains of *Chlorella*, and the balance of protein, carbohydrate and fat in a chosen strain can be varied by choosing the appropriate conditions of growth for the culture.

This algal culture circulates through pipes which permit an exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide with the atmosphere, and also dissipate heat. The *Chlorella* sludge is drawn off into another vessel where it is treated so that the starch is partially hydrolysed to maltose, which is then burnt slightly to give the honey-and-wafers flavour (*Exodus* 16:31). The dried material is then fed to two vessels. One is emptied daily to provide the day's supply, and the other fills slowly during the week so that two days' supply is available on the eve of the Sabbath. This was so that the machine could be stopped, cleaned, and put on-stream again.

The machine had to provide an "omer" of manna per day per family for 600 families. (In *Exodus* 7:37 the word "thousand" can also mean "heads of families".) This is equivalent to about 1·5 cubic metres of manna per day. Since we are told that manna "was like coriander seed" (*Exodus* 16:31), the story that the manna was picked from the ground is clearly unacceptable—gathering it would be more than a full-time job.

What happened to the machine? After the Israelites left the wilderness, it was not needed any more; indeed, it stopped working (*Joshua* 5:12). After the capture of Jericho, the machine, now a holy object, was kept at Shiloh (*1 Samuel* 4:3). Later, it was captured by the Philistines, who hastily returned it after it killed many of them, and inflicted a plague of "emerods" upon the survivors (*1 Samuel*). The second century (CE) Judaeo-Roman commentator Josephus says that the Philistines also suffered from diarrhoea because of it. On its return, King David re-instated it as a ritual object in a tent at Jerusalem (*1 Chronicles* 15:1) and his son Solomon built the first Temple to house it (*2 Chronicles* 2:5). When the Temple was sacked in about 600 BCE, the machine was destroyed.

Machines on board spacecraft

Machines of this type would be essential equipment on board space vehicles, since they perform the dual functions of providing oxygen to breathe and food to eat. Soviet scientists have constructed such a machine and used it for purifying the air in a closed environment (on board a Salyut space laboratory) in which men lived for some months. However, the cultures were fertilised with the cosmonauts' own excreta and, possibly for that reason, were not eaten. Our present fermentation technology is not quite as advanced as that used in the manna-machine, the principal component missing being the high intensity, high efficiency light source. Laser optics might just about meet the requirement.

The question remains—where did the manna-machine of the Israelites come from? It is tempting to speculate, with many other contemporary writers, that the Earth was visited by space people some 3000 years ago and to go on to suggest that it was these visitors who provided the machine. This raises as many problems as it solves, and we would prefer not to propound such a hypothesis today. Perhaps, when we have completed our research on the texts, we will be able to answer this question. □